Under the ISOPOM, the States are provided flexibility in implementation of the programmes based on regionally differentiated approach to promote crop diversification and provide focused attention. An amount of Rs. 194.00 crore has been provided for the year 2007-08 for this purpose.

Bridge over Brahmaputra

*230. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether fourth bridge over Brahmaputra in Bogibeel in the Dibrugarh district, Assam was supposed to be completed in the year 2004, subsequently it was changed to 2009 and at present it is expected to be completed by 2012;

(b) what is the reason behind this slow pace;

(c) whether any tender has been finalized as yet for any stage; and

(d) when is the work expected to start and to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) Rail-cum-Road Bridge at Bogibeed in Assam was approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in Sept., 1997 at an abstract cost of Rs. 942 crore with cost sharing between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Road-Transport and Highways and the work was to be completed in a period of 5 years. Further, revised cost of bridge as per detailed survey and preliminary design was estimated as Rs. 1767 crore with share of Ministry of Railways as Rs. 1109 crore and that of Department of Road Transport and Highways (DORTH) as Rs. 658 crore. The then Prime Minister inaugurated the commencement of work in April, 2002 with a targeted completion period of 6 years. However, the project is progressing as per the availability of funds through Railway's Gross Budgetary Support only. An expenditure of Rs. 700 crore had been incurred till March 2007 and an outlay of Rs. 249.45 crore has been provided in the year 2007-08. The project was declared as "National Project' in Dec' 06 and mode of Hiding has been approved in Aug.' 07 only.

(c) and (d) Tender for collection of bulders for north and south banks, protection works for main bridge/link lines and earthwork, minor and major bridges, Railway Overbridges (ROBs), station building, ballast supply and track work for link lines has been awarded and the works taken up. Tenders for sub-structure of main bridge are under process.

Decrease in production due to soil erosion of agricultural land

†*231. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the possibilities of decrease in production rate due to soil erosion of agricultural land in the country have been assessed;

(b) if so, the estimated average annual decrease in production rate in the country, as a result thereof; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the amount of annual loss being suffered by agriculture sector as per assessment of this decrease?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. As per study conducted by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), out of a total geographical area of 328.60 million ha., about 146.82 million ha. area is subjected to various kinds of land degradation, which includes water erosion of 93.68 million ha. in the country. The average annual productivity of agricultural land decreases with increase in soil erosion, being 2210, 1490 and 670 Kg. per ha. under low, medium and high erosion categories respectively as per details below:

Status of erosion	Soil loss (Tonnes/ha)	Area and water erosion (Million ha.)	productivity (Kg./ha.)
Low	Less than 10	3.15	2210
Medium	10-20	15.29	1490
High	20-40	67.45	670
Very High	More than 40	7.81	Not fit for agriculture
TOTAL:		93.70	

The average rate of soil erosion in the country is 16.4 tonnes per hectare per year. Out of total eroded soil, 61% simply moves from one place to another, nearly 29% is lost permanently to the sea and remaining 10% is deposited in the reservoirs. The soil erosion leads to land degradation in upper reaches of the river system, whereas when deposited at various locations of river system in the downstream, it may increase the soil fertility. About 5.3 million tones of soil and around 8.40 million tones of plant nutrients are displaced annually through water erosion. Rough estimate also show that agricultural loss from soil erosion various to the tune of Rs. 5200 — 8400 crore per annum in the country.

Government of India is implementing various Watershed Development Programmes with a view to minimizing soil erosion, land degradation and thereby sustaining agricultural production in the country. These programmes are: (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area (NWDPRA), (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP&FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soils (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Projects for Shifting Cultivation Area (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP), (vii) Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP), (viii) Watershed Development Fund (WDF) and (ix) Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) for development of degraded lands in the country. Under these programmes, since inception upto Tenth Five Year Plan an area of about 50.83 million ha. of degraded lands have been developed as per scheme-wise and details enclosed as a Statement *(See* below). Parts of such developed land are also brought under cultivation to sustain agricultural production besides increasing productive potential of soil.

Statement

Degraded Lands Developed under various Watershed Development Programme, since inception upto Tenth Five Year Plan

(Area in Lakh ha. and Expenditure in Rs. Crore)

Sl. No.	Ministry/Scheme and year of start	Progress since inception upto IX Plan		Progress during XPlan* (2002-07)		Progress since inception upto end of XPlan*	
		Area	Expr.			Area	Expr.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	(A) Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation)						
1.	NWDPRA (1990-91)	69.79	1877.74	23.30	1147.82	93.09	3025.56
2.	RVP&FPR (1962 & 81)	54.88	1516.26	9.98	727.98	64.86	2244.24
3.	WDPSCA (1974-75)	2.58	166.27	1.35	129.31	3.93	295.58
4.	RAS (1985-86)	5.81	76.39	1.30	45.35	7.11	121.74
5.	WDF (1999-00)	0.00	0.00	0.59	26.02	0.59	26.02
6.	EAPs	13.35	2039.81	4.80	1927.54	18.15	3967.35
	SUB TOTAL :	146.41	5676.47	41.32	4004.02	187.73	9680.49
	(B) Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources)						
1.	DPAP (1973-74)	68.95	3284.74	68.32	1557.76	137.27	4842.50
2.	DDP (1977-78)	33.56	797.38	45.17	1152.50	78.73	1949.88
3.	IWDP (1988-89)	37.34	616.51	62.22	1821.64	99.56	2438.15
4.	EAPs	1.40	18.39	3.60	274.28	5.00	292.67
	SUB TOTAL :	141.25	4717.02	179.31	4806.18	320.56	9523.20
	TOTAL (A+B):	287.66	10393.49	220.63	8810.20	508.29	19203.69

*includes tentative achievement of 2006-2007.

Abbreviations:

NWDPRA - National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area
RVP & FPR - River Valley Project & Flood Prone River
WDPSCA - Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Area
RAS - Reclamation of Alkali Soils
WDF - Watershed Development Fund
EAPs - Externally Aided Projects
DPAPs - Drought Prone Area Projects
DDP - Desert Development Progaramme
IWDP - Integrated Wasteland Development Project

Source: Working Group Report of Natural Resource Management for Eleventh Five year Plan, constituted by Planning Commission, New Delhi, Feb., 2007.